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**Criminal Justice & Corrections  
Committee**

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**HB 2747**

**Brief Description:** Revising the model policy for disclosure of sex offender information.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Lovick, O'Brien, Ericks, Kilmer, Simpson and Moeller.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs to create a model policy on sex offenders.

**Hearing Date:** 1/26/06

**Staff:** Jim Morishima (786-7191).

**Background:**

In 1990, the Legislature enacted the Community Protection Act, which created one of the first sex offender registration laws in the country. A person convicted of a sex or kidnapping offense must register with the county sheriff of the county in which he or she resides. An offender must provide a variety of information when registering including his or her name, address, date and place of birth, place of employment, crime of conviction, date and place of conviction, aliases, social security number, photograph, and fingerprints. The offender must also notify the county sheriff if he or she is enrolled in a public or private school or in an institution of higher education. Failure to meet the registration requirements is an unranked class C felony.

Law enforcement agencies are authorized to release information regarding registered sex offenders based on the offenders' risk level, which is initially assigned by the Department of Corrections' End of Sentence Review Committee and may subsequently be re-assigned by law enforcement. For example, for risk level I offenders (evaluated as the lowest level of risk within the larger community), a law enforcement agency may only disclose information about the offenders to specified persons and entities; e.g., schools, victims, witnesses. In contrast, for risk level III offenders (evaluated as the most risky to the community), a law enforcement agency may disclose information about the offenders to the public at large.

In 1997, the Legislature directed the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) to develop a model policy for law enforcement agencies to follow when disclosing sex offender information to the public. The model policy has not been significantly revised since its creation in 1997.

## **Summary of Bill:**

When funded, the WASPC must convene a sex offender model policy work group to develop a model policy for law enforcement agencies and other criminal justice personnel. The model policy must contain recommendations on the following issues:

- Procedures that local agencies may follow when making community notifications, including best practices relevant to the specific needs and characteristics of each community and the risk posed to that community;
- The contents and form of community notification documents;
- Methods of distributing community notification documents;
- Methods of providing follow-up notifications to community residents;
- Methods of providing information to other jurisdictions if necessary to protect the public;
- Methods of educating community residents at public meetings;
- Procedures and documents for local law enforcement agencies to provide appropriate notification when a sex offender risk level is re-classified;
- Formulae and instructions on standard sex offender risk assessment instruments;
- Strategies for sex offender management; and
- Other matters deemed necessary by the WASPC.

The model policy must provide guidelines for sex offender registration, community notification, and strategies for sex offender management. When convened, the work group must conduct community meetings around the state to assess the practices and needs of communities and identify best practices on sex offender registration, community notification, and strategies on sex offender management. Once input from stakeholders has been received the work group must present a model policy to the WASPC for adoption or rejection.

If the policy is adopted, the work group must conduct meetings around the state with law enforcement and other criminal justice personnel to review the model policy and conduct training. The task force will then be dissolved and the WASPC will take over the promotion of the model policy.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.